

REMARKS:

Claims 1 and 4-5 have been deemed in condition for allowance.

Method claim 12 has been objected to because "a towing vehicle" has been recited in the pre-amble. Claim 12 has been modified and accordingly the objection should now be withdrawn.

Claims 6, 9, 12 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Hart. Claims 10-11, 16, 17 and 19 have been deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

In accordance with the Examiner's decision regarding the Hart reference applicant has now rewritten claims 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 and 19 to place the claims in condition for allowance.

The Hart reference demonstrates a locking mechanism 50, with a key 52. However, Hart does not show the pair of retractable arms as provided by the inventor. Accordingly, applicant has now included the pair of retractable arms in the independent claims including independent method claim 12.

Accordingly, applicant believes that applicant's device and method are now patentably distinct over the prior art of record including the Hart reference.

Claim allowance is therefore earnestly solicited at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

By:

Walter L. Beavers

Walter L. Beavers
Attorney For Applicant
Registration No. 26,704
326 South Eugene Street
Greensboro, North Carolina 27401
Telephone: (336) 275-7601
Facsimile: (336) 275-2009
E-mail: wbeavers@bellsouth.net

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Mail Stop AF, Group Art Unit 3611, Attention: Examiner Tony H. Winner (8 pages including cover letter) to Fax No. (571)273-8300 on this 30th day of March, 2006.

Walter L. Beavers

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